

# Deaf-Mutes' Journal

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"There are more men ennobled by reading than by nature"

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Number 26

## Laying of the Cornerstone at Fanwood in 1853

AN ACCOUNT OF THE CEREMONIES AT THE WASHINGTON HEIGHTS SITE OF THE NEW YORK SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

From the Press of Geo. F. Nesbitt, Corner of Wall and Water Streets, 1853

The cornerstone of the new building for the institution was laid on Tuesday, November 22d, 1853.

At an early hour in the morning, the pupils of the institution, to the number of two hundred and eighty, were escorted to the grounds by their instructors. The invited guests were conveyed in a special train provided for them by the Hudson River Railroad Company, and arrived on the premises at 11 o'clock A.M. The company assembled at the Mansion House, where they formed in procession, and moved to the site selected for the building. The pupils followed, and took their seats on a wooden amphitheatre which had been erected for their accommodation. The ladies and other guests were provided with seats on a platform conveniently arranged. In the centre of the area, encircled by these temporary structures, lay the cornerstone, and contiguous to it, a broad platform, on which stood his honor the mayor of New York, the Right Rev. Dr. Wainwright, bishop of the Episcopal Church of the diocese of New York, the Reverend Doctors Adams and Knox, Comptroller Flagg, Judge Scott, Silvanus Miller, Esq., the Rev. Isaac Lewis, D.D., Rev. William W. Turner, acting principal of the American Asylum for the deaf and dumb at Hartford; Laurent Clerc, the venerable pupil of Sicard, and long a teacher in the Hartford institution; the officers and directors of the institution, and a number of the instructors of the deaf and dumb.

The order of exercises was read by Robert D. Weeks, Esq., chairman of the building committee, after which—

The Right Rev. Bishop Wainwright, being introduced to the assembly, then made the invocation and prayer.

Harvey P. Peet, LL.D., President of the institution, then made the opening address, which was as follows:—

*Friends and Fellow-Laborers in the Cause of Humanity:—*

In the occasion that has drawn us together—the laying of the cornerstone of a new building for the New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb—bringing to our consideration, both the rapid expansion of our city, which has compelled a removal of the institution from its old site, and the growth of the institution itself, demanding more spacious accommodations than that site, ample as it was once deemed, could afford; there is much to force anew on our attention the wonderful progress so often boasted of, as emphatically the characteristic of the nineteenth century—more emphatically, of our own favored land.

This progress is not manifested alone in the colossal growth of cities and states, which, from small and feeble beginnings, are rising up with magical celerity to rival the proudest cities and the most towering empires of the old world; not alone in the spread of free principles of government; in the swelling tide of public and private wealth, or the grand achievements of science and mechanical skill. Other indications of progress there are, yet more worthy of an enlightened, philanthropic and Christian people—more gratifying to those who believe in the future improvement and high destinies of the human race—our schools and colleges, our asylums for the unfortunate and afflicted; in short, all the means for the more equal diffusion of

intelligence and happiness, share in the onward impulse.

Of this gratifying fact, a multitude of illustrations will readily occur to you. The remarkable success and prosperity of our own institution, is not one of the least striking; and if we review the multiplication and growth of kindred institutions in almost all Christian countries, we shall find strong confirmation of the belief, that the intellectual, moral and religious progress of the present age, at least fully keep pace with its material advancement; and that there is, on the whole,



New York School for the Deaf—1856

The tower was destroyed by storm July 14, 1858

nothing to discourage the consolatory belief, that God is preparing the world for that millennium which is to come in his own good time.

Less than three centuries have elapsed since the first recorded efforts were made, contemporaneously by Pedro Ponce, a Spanish monk, and Joachim Pasch, a German pastor, to lead to the light of knowledge and religion some few of those our unfortunate fellowmen, whom the deprivation of speech and hearing had shut out of the pale of social and religious privileges, during so many thousand years. Less than one century has passed since the benevolent and self-denying De l'Epee founded the first institution, devoting to it both his life and his own private fortune, for the free instruction of the indigent deaf and dumb; and already there are, in Europe and America, two hundred such institutions, all but twelve or thirteen of which have sprung up within the last fifty years.

And though the oldest institution for the deaf and dumb on this side of the Atlantic, that of Hartford, is but a year older than our own, and our own has numbered only just half as many years as are usually reckoned to the life of man, there are now sixteen such institutions in as many states of the union, all supported mainly by appropriations from the state treasuries. More than half of these were opened within the last ten years.

Nine states, which have as yet no institutions for deaf-mutes within their own borders, have made provision for educating, in some cases all, and in others, a large proportion of their indigent deaf and dumb, in a school in some neighboring state. There is, I rejoice to say, scarcely a state in the union, of any considerable population and resources, that has not fully, or in part, acknowledged the claims of this interesting and unfortunate portion of its population to the means of intellectual and spiritual life.

In the number of pupils under instruction, the increase has been equally encouraging. Twenty-one years ago all the American schools for the deaf and dumb, then six in number, contained barely four hundred pupils, six-sevenths of whom were from states north and east of the Potomac, leaving

still unprovided for nearly or quite one-half of the deaf-mutes in the eastern and middle states; while south of the Potomac and west of the Alleghanies, deaf-mutes, to whom the advantages of education were accessible, formed rare exceptions to the general deplorable doom of their companions in misfortune. Ten years later, the number of schools in actual operation had not increased, (one in this state having been merged in our own, and one in Virginia opened in the interval), but the number of pupils had risen to six hundred. Since then the cause has received a new impulse. The

present number of pupils in our sixteen institutions, is not far from twelve hundred, the number of pupils having doubled, and of schools more than doubled, within the last

Though in some of the remote and sparsely settled states nothing, or ten years.

comparatively little, has yet been done, and in some old and populous ones, I regret to say, the provision is yet very inadequate; yet when we look at the facts just stated and remember, that also the term of instruction has been everywhere extended from the three years first deemed enough, till now our own state, and some others, allow from seven to ten years in certain cases; we have abundant encouragement to hope that the time is not remote when in all the states of our

union—may I not say also in all Christian lands—as now in our own state, and several of our sister states, and in some of the Teutonic countries of Europe—the high and holy law will be recognized and practically carried out, that every child capable of instruction, has a claim on the community for the best means of moral and mental cultivation.

Our own great and prosperous state stands, I rejoice to say, where she ought to stand—among the foremost in the liberality of her provisions in behalf of the deaf and dumb. The institution which has grown up under her fostering care, is nearly equal, in number of pupils, to that of London, long the largest in the world; and in that respect, at least, is far in advance of every other similar institution on either side of the Atlantic; and its conductors have zealously labored (with what degree of success it does not become me to judge) to place it in the front rank of institutions for deaf-mutes, in all the requisites of usefulness—all the means of mental, moral and religious education.

Through the efforts of a few philanthropic men, nearly all of whom have rested from their labors, the "New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb" was incorporated, in April, 1817, and opened for the reception of pupils, in May, 1818. For the first year, its pecuniary means, with the exception of a small but encouraging donation from the city, were derived from private benevolence. A rapid increase in the number of pupils, and a still more rapid increase of applications from the interior of the state, made necessary an appeal to the legislature for aid. Nor was this appeal made in vain. The evidence presented to the legislature by a delegation of directors, teachers and pupils, sent to Albany, of the practicability of instructing the deaf and dumb, and of the numbers of this unfortunate class in the state, awakened a warm interest and sympathy, testified by a prompt donation of ten thousand dollars. Preceded only a year or two by a donation of money by the state of Connecticut, and a few weeks by one of land by Congress to

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## LAYING THE CORNERSTONE IN 1853

(Continued from page 1)

the asylum at Hartford, this was the third practical recognition, by an American legislature, of the claims of the deaf and dumb. And well and nobly has our state followed out this auspicious beginning. Through all the political changes of the state, there has been no retrograde movement in the cause of benevolence. To the appropriations to the school for the deaf and dumb, have since been added liberal donations to the establishments for the instruction of the blind, the relief of the insane, and, finally, for the education of idiots.

In April, 1822, the legislative provision for the education of the deaf and dumb first assumed a specific and permanent character. Provision was then made for thirty-two state beneficiaries, limited to three years each. This term was, however, as early as 1825, extended to four years, a period still very inadequate, but sufficient to qualify not a few of our early pupils for a gratifying degree of respectability, usefulness and happiness. For several years, with this comparatively scanty provision, aided by the donations of some benevolent citizens of New York, and the receipts of a few paying pupils, the institution struggled on. The number of pupils was little over fifty, more than twenty of whom were day scholars, often irregular in their attendance, and exposed to many dangers in the streets.

Twenty-six years ago, October 19, 1827, a ceremony like that which has now drawn us together, attracted an assemblage, comprising many of the most honored citizens of our city and state, to a spot on the southerly side of Fiftieth Street, then an open field, surrounded by orchards, pastures, woods and swamps—which, with here and there a frame building in a garden, covered, at that point, the whole breadth of the island. Here, after anxious years devoted to the collection of funds, by repeated appeals to the benevolent, and by the practice of strict economy, encouraged at last by a conditional donation of ten thousand dollars from the state treasury, and by the gift from the city of an acre of land for the site of the principal buildings, the directors of the New York Institution for the Deaf and Dumb laid the cornerstone of their first modest building. Though designed to accommodate a greater increase of pupils than was then anticipated for many years, its dimensions were only one hundred and ten feet by sixty, and three stories beside the basement.

The late eminent scholar and philanthropist, Dr. Samuel L. Mitchell, as president of the Board of Directors, officiated at the ceremony, but gave the principal part to the Hon. A. C. Flagg, then the able and distinguished Superintendent of Common Schools of our state. In the chief places around them, were the members of our city government, and the board of directors of that year—comprising, among other honored names, most of those who had first raised their voices in behalf of the deaf and dumb of New York, and who had zealously and faithfully watched over the institution from its first feeble beginnings. There were the Rev. Dr. James Milnor, Dr. Samuel Akerly, Stephen Allen, Rev. John Stanford, Rev. Dr. Macauley, John Slidell, Philip Hone, Jonas Mapes and others, whose forms have passed from our sight, and whose spirits from our earthly communion; but whose memory is yet fresh and precious in many hearts, and whose counsels and example remain, leading us onward in the course of right, and of enlightened benevolence.

Of this venerated band, two, (Lewis Seymour and Timothy Hedges) yet remain to aid us with their mature counsels, and rejoice in the results of their long years of benevolent labor.

"A pensive interest," said the newspaper notices, "was added to the occasion," by the presence of the deaf and dumb pupils of the institution, then about sixty in number, some few of whom are here, with a larger number of the pupils of subsequent years, living evidences of the blessings the institution has conferred, attracted to this scene by that strong interest which worthy *alumni* ever feel in their *alma mater*, (and, by the way, an institution for the deaf and dumb is, most emphatically, an *alma mater*, a foster-mother, to its pupils).

How striking is the contrast between the condition of our institution and of our city twenty-six years ago and now! How suggestive of yet greater advances in the future! For neither has reached its full growth, or gained the culminating point of its prosperity. With both, progress and growth result from causes which, so far as human foresight can pierce, must continue to work for generations to come. While we continue to obey the laws which the Most High has ordained as the condition of healthy and enduring prosperity, we may hope, in humble reliance on the continuance of his divine favor, that that prosperity will continue unchecked and unmarred.

The history of the institution, at least during the period just mentioned, has been an almost uninterrupted record of mercies, of augmented reputation, of increasing means of usefulness, of a progress still upward and onward.

The new building rose in fair proportions, under the watchful care of its benevolent and disinterest-

ed guardians; it was finished and occupied; new teachers were obtained, capable of supplying whatever had been deficient in the method of instruction, as compared with the most successful schools for deaf-mutes then existing; and yet other improvements were made in this respect, which have been embodied in works that have since come into general use in American schools for deaf-mutes; from the legislature were obtained repeated augmentations of the number of state beneficiaries commensurate with the number of deaf-mutes in the state, (the number now allowed being one hundred and ninety-two), and extensions of the term of instruction more nearly adequate to their wants. Instead of the three and four years first allowed, from five to seven years are now allowed in ordinary cases, and three years more to those judged capable of successfully prosecuting higher branches of study. With the gradual increase of pupils and of means, the buildings were thrice enlarged, and the time was fast approaching when another enlargement would become imperatively needful.

Meantime the city, which twenty years ago lay in distant prospect from our upper windows, was shooting forth its roots, in the form of canals and railroads, and lines of ocean steamers, and expanding with a growth that outran the expectations of the most sanguine. With our increasing need of ample space for fresh air, and the outdoor recreations of so many youth, the space available for our purposes was becoming more restricted. Where recently had been only swamps, pastures and woods, streets were opening, and lines of building going up all around us. The period seemed not remote when a dense population would press upon us on every side. We had, by incurring a considerable debt, secured, as we hoped, grounds large enough for the necessary uses of the institution, and the indispensable outdoor exercise of the pupils; but the opening, against our earnest remonstrances, of a wide street through the whole length of those grounds, entirely marring them for our purposes, and the prospect that yet another would be ordered, perhaps destroying the safe and easy communication between the different parts of the establishment, convinced us that it was in vain to attempt to stem the flood of improvement; and that our best plan was a speedy removal while an eligible site could be secured on fair terms, and near enough to the business centre of the city for necessary communication, yet not so near that the institution, would at least in our day, be again driven forth by the pressure of the advancing city.

I have spoken of the sixty pupils who were present at the laying of that cornerstone twenty-six years ago. You will have a clearer idea of the growth of the institution, when you look to that group of our present pupils, two hundred and seventy-seven in number, exclusive of several deaf-mute teachers and employees. There you see deaf-mutes from almost every county in our great state, from several other states, and from the British provinces. While some are children of wealthy parents, by far the larger number must have remained without instruction, had not the helping hand of the state or of the city been extended to them in their need, bringing hope and joy to hundreds of afflicted families. In the beaming countenances of those voiceless children and youth, you may read the interest they take in this occasion—looking forward, as most of them do, to happy years of social communion, and precious opportunities of improvement, in the fair and spacious edifice which they already see in imagination towering before them. And with this feeling is one of pleasure and gratitude, not less deep because silent, to find that, lonely and neglected as they once deemed themselves, they and their concerns can awaken in the better portion of the community, such an interest as draws to this remote spot an assembly, like that they see around them; such good-will and benevolent feeling as they read in the faces of all present.

Full of gratulation and good augury is this occasion for all the friends of the institution. Of its permanent existence, its continued prosperity, we have, indeed, never permitted ourselves to doubt. But standing here, with God's past providential dealings to the institution fresh in our recollection, and looking around and abroad, we cannot but feel that he has now cast our lot in one of the pleasant places of the earth. In these ample grounds, with choice of sun or shade; with store of fruit in their season, and opportunity for healthful outdoor labor; with this varied and magnificent panorama spread around; the heights rich in historical associations, tempting the adventurous foot of youth; the broad river, bearing on its bosom the greatest interior commerce in the world, presenting an ever-varying scene of interest; in such a home as this, surely our pupils will find whatever aid and incentive any location and scenery can give to physical development, mental activity and moral elevation; and with these, happiness, with God's blessing, will be in their own power.

How brief seems the time since river and shore were a vast solitude; the stealthy step of the savage through the forests not more frequent than those

of the bear or the wolf; the water rarely disturbed by his light canoe. Not greater is the change to this full and overflowing evidence of civilization, population and wealth, than is that change from the dull blank of ignorance to the full development of intelligence, and of moral and religious feeling, which has rejoiced the hearts of so many anxious parents of deaf-mutes—which is exemplified in so many of our pupils, and which, we trust, will here be wrought till that millennial period shall arrive, when, if there shall yet remain any deprived of speech and hearing, every parent will be qualified to minister to their intellectual and spiritual necessities.

Till that happy time shall come, let us, gentlemen of the board of directors, and teachers of the institution, relying on the sympathy and aid of all friends of humanity; let us labor, faltering not at temporary difficulties, as becomes the descendants of those who fought and bled on these heights; zealously as becomes Christians who feel the value of so many immortal souls as are intrusted to our keeping; hopefully, in reliance on His favor who has so signally prospered our past labors, and who has said, "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame man shall leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing."

The list of articles deposited in the cornerstone, was read by Israel Russell, Esq. Hon. Jacob A. Westervelt, Mayor of New York City, then superintended the laying of the cornerstone with the usual ceremonies, after which he delivered the following:

## ADDRESS

My friends, the occasion which has called us together, is one of particular interest, and I am happy to see it honored by the presence of so many of my fellow-citizens. The institution, the cornerstone of which has now been laid, is intended for the instruction of those unfortunates on whom the afflicting hand of God has been laid, in depriving them of their speech and hearing. Time was, my friends, and that not very far remote, when one thus situated was removed from almost all intercourse with the outward world, save by such signs as nature might have taught, and those were unintelligible except to the few who might perhaps be brought into daily contact with them alone. Thanks, however, to many noble philanthropists, we may now almost say that the dumb are taught to speak, and the deaf to hear. The mute is now, by the aid of institutions like this, brought into communion with his fellowmen, and the germs of the intellect planted in him by the Almighty, are fostered and cherished, and nourished into maturity and growth, the once afflicted being enabled to assume that rank amongst his fellowmen that becomes a useful and intelligent citizen. But it is not my place to expatiate upon the objects or benefits of such an institution: the duty which devolved upon me discharged, I shall listen to those around me who are better qualified, and more capable of doing justice to such a subject.

The Rev. Dr. Adams of the Board of Directors then made the following:

## ADDRESS

I can conceive of no reason why I should have been requested to add anything to the interesting addresses which have already been made, rather than others of my associates in the board of directors, except it has been thought that some testimony from one of my profession was not altogether inappropriate or unbecoming to the occasion. After his honor the chief magistrate of our municipal government has spoken of the relation of this occasion to the fame and philanthropy of the city; after the excellent president of our institution has presented those historic statements, which belong to the services of this day—it may not be considered without interest or pertinency if, as a minister of religion, I should say a word of the bearings of this occasion on the cause of morals and religion. It was the boast of Augustus Caesar that he found the city of Rome composed of brick, and left it marble. But the imperial city, even in the days of its Augustan splendor and magnificence, could not boast of one of those philanthropic institutions which are the chief ornaments of a Christian metropolis. It had its long aqueducts of marble stretching across the valleys, and its sculptured arches spanning the streets—its triumphal pillars piercing the skies; its amphitheatres of colossal dimensions, and its every form of classic elegance and might; but not one hospital for the sick; not one retreat for the insane; not one asylum for the blind; not one refuge for the orphan; not one institution for the mute. "When was it known that one born blind has been made to see?" "When has it happened aforesaid after this fashion?" were the expressions of wonder and delight when the Son of God wrought his miracle of healing; and all the humane and charitable institutions

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## LAYING THE CORNERSTONE IN 1853

(Continued from page 2)

which now exist in the world, have sprung up in the footsteps of his religion, as flowers and verdure follow in the path of the sun. Painters of all schools and ages have studied to throw upon canvas the expression of wonder, gratitude and delight which overspread the pale face of blind Bartimeneus, when, at the touch of Christ, his eye first saw the light, and he gazed upon the face of his Lord; and the same emotion in the face and attitude of the deaf-mute, when the great physician put his finger into the dull and dead ear, uttering the miraculous "Ephphatha," "Be opened," and his ears were unstopped to catch the sweet sound of his Saviour's words, and the imprisoned tongue sprang from the chains of silence into the music of gratitude and praise. No mortal hand may repeat the miracle—no human surgery can promise in every case healing and relief; but the hand made cunning by the skill of Christian compassion has wrought wonders already by its vicarious speech, and given an almost miraculous mercy to the darkened and silent soul of the unfortunate. There are many interesting psychological inquiries which are suggested in regard to those who are deprived of one or more of the senses, as whether, to use the allegorical language of Bunyan, when "ear gate" and "eye gate," those avenues of approach to the "town of Mansoul," be closed up, there be not some new method of access, not recognizable to our senses, by which our Father in Heaven draws nigh to his afflicted children? I have no visionary theory to suggest on this subject; but it is a pleasant testimony that I am able to give, after a close examination, that in the process of instructing the deaf-mute, it has been a question with me whether there be any disadvantage in the loss of human sounds of folly and error, which mislead and delude so many others. There has been an abundant success in developing the conscience, warming into life their religious sentiments, and establishing direct communion with the Father of spirits. I have often been delighted at the clearness, simplicity and promptness of the replies which have been made by the mute to questions of a religious import.

"Who made the world?" was the question once proposed to a little boy in the institution. Without an instant's delay, the chalk had rapidly traced the answer:—

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

"Why did Jesus come into the world?" was the next question proposed. With a smile of gratitude, the little fellow wrote in reply:

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." The astonished visitor, desirous of testing the religious nature of the pupil to the utmost, ventured at length to ask.

"Why were you born deaf and dumb, when I can both hear and speak?" With the sweetest and most touching expression of meek resignation on the face of the boy, the rapid chalk replied.

"Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight."

We rejoice in the privilege of taking part in the services of this occasion. We count it a pleasant thing to be present at the beginning of an edifice, where ampler accommodations shall invite multitudes of the afflicted to its fostering care. We welcome them not only to a safe shelter, to kindly protection, to useful arts, but to the teaching and consolations of religion. We congratulate those who will come after us, afflicted like those who are now with us, in the advantages which will accrue to them from what we have founded today. Here let knowledge and religion receive and educate them. On these pleasant lawns let their playful feet find recreation long after our own have rested from the pilgrimage of life. Here may God speak to them in the vision of the morning, and of the stars; and within the chapel here to be consecrated to his worship, may generations be prepared for the temple on high, where no tongue is silent and no ear is deaf.

At the conclusion of Dr. Adams' address, Mr. Wetmore called attention to the presence of Judge Scott, who drew the charter of the institution; to Silvanus Miller and Azariah C. Flagg, Esqs., who were present at the laying of the cornerstone of the first building erected for its accommodation;

and to Laurent Clerc, of Hartford, a native of France, who was one of the deaf-mute pupils of the Abbe Sicard, and came to this country, as an instructor of the deaf and dumb, more than thirty years ago.

Mr. Clerc then addressed the audience in the sign-language, describing the progress which had been made in the instruction of the deaf and dumb, and expressing his thanks to the Most High for the wonderful mercy with which he had tempered their peculiar affliction. His remarks were interpreted orally by Mr. Edward Peet.

The benediction was then pronounced by Rev. Dr. Knox, after which the company returned to the Mansion House, where they partook of an abundant collation provided by Mrs. Stoner, the estimable and efficient matron of the institution.

The edibles having received their due share of attention, toasts were drank in coffee and cold water, and pleasant speeches were made by Mr. Wetmore, Dr. Peet, the Revs. W. W. Turner and Eastman, Silvanus Miller, and Azariah C. Flagg, Esqs., Hon. Erastus Brooks, Dr. Tuthill, and Professors Van Nostrand, Cooke and I. L. Peet.

At half-past four o'clock P.M., a down train of cars stopped in front of the premises, and the guests returned to the city.

This occasion was marked by several acts of generous liberality, which deserve mention. The Hudson River Railroad Company declined to receive any remuneration for the passage of several hundred persons; the board and their guests, to and from Washington Heights; Mr. John T. Boyd, the head of the dispatch post establishment, declined to make any charge for delivering several hundred invitations; several volumes, for deposit in the cornerstone, were presented by Mr. Valentine, Mr. Rode, and others; the massive leaden box, filling the cavity in the stone, was presented for the occasion by Messrs. Philbin and Quin. These, and other instances of similar good feeling towards the institution, have been formally acknowledged in resolution of the board of directors.

## ARTICLES IN THE CORNERSTONE

1. Parchment containing date of the act of incorporation and establishment of the institution, original officers and directors of the same, autographs of the present officers and directors, instructors, architect, etc., etc., names of officers of the general government, and officers of the government of the State of New York.
2. Twenty-fifth report and documents of the New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb, for the year 1843, containing a history of the institution for the first twenty-five years of its existence.
3. Twenty-sixth report, embracing a report of the schools for the deaf and dumb in central and western Europe, by Rev. George E. Day, 1844.
4. Thirty-third report, containing a report of a visit to institutions for the instruction of the deaf and dumb, in France, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium and Great Britain, by Harvey P. Peet, President of the Board, 1851.
5. Thirty-fourth report, for the year 1852.
6. Address delivered at the New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb, December 21, 1846, containing the proceedings of the dedication of the chapel.
7. Address delivered in Commons Hall, at Raleigh, on the occasion of laying the cornerstone of the North Carolina Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb, April 14th, 1848, by Harvey P. Peet, LL.D.
8. Course of instruction for the deaf and dumb, by Harvey P. Peet, LL.D.

Part first, third edition, 1849.  
Part second, 1849.  
Part third, 1850, and  
Scripture lessons.

9. Proceedings of the first convention of American instructors of the deaf and dumb, held at the New York Institution, August 28th, 29th and 30th, 1850.
10. Proceedings of the second convention of American instructors of the deaf and dumb, held at the American Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, Hartford, Connecticut, on the 27th, 28th 29th, August, 1851.
11. American Annals of the Deaf and Dumb, Volume V, No. 4, Hartford, July, 1853.
12. By-laws, etc., for 1830, 1845 and 1853, together with all the acts of the legislature, the names of all the officers, directors and instructors of the institution, to this date.
13. Wood engravings by eight pupils, July 6th, 1853.
14. Rev. James Milnor, D.D., president of the institution from 1829 to 1845, presented by Israel Russell.
15. Elevation and ground plans.
16. Manual of the common council for 1853, presented by D. T. Valentine, Esq.
17. Laws and ordinances of the corporation, presented by D. T. Valentine, Esq.
18. Map of the City of New York for 1853, folded.
19. Map of the State of New York, for 1853.
20. Map of the United States of America, for 1853.
21. General Washington, with his farewell address, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution of the United States, presented by Israel Russell.
22. Statement of the United States census for 1850.
23. American coins of 1853, from a half cent up to one dollar.
24. Roman coins issued during the republic of 1848, presented by B. R. Winthrop.
25. Bronze medals of Gilbert Stuart and Washington Allston, presented by Andrew Warner.
26. New York City directory for the year 1786, presented by Prosper M. Wetmore.
27. New York directory for 1853-54, presented by Charles R. Rode.
28. Copies of the evening papers of 21st, November, 1853.  
Evening Post, Monday, November 21st, 1853  
New York Commercial Advertiser, "  
New York Evening Express, "  
New York Evening Times, "  
Evening Mirror, "  
Copies of all the morning papers of Tuesday, November 22d, 1853.  
New York Journal of Commerce.  
New York Express.  
Morning Courier and New York Enquirer.  
The Sun.  
New York Herald.  
New York Tribune.  
New York Daily Times.  
Daily National Democrat.  
True National Democrat.  
The Day Book, by female compositors.
30. Twenty-first annual report of the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb at Philadelphia, 1852.
31. Twentieth annual report of the Pennsylvania Institution for the Blind, in Philadelphia, 1852.
32. Seventeenth annual report of the New York Institution for the Blind, 1852.
33. Twenty-eighth annual report of the Society for the Reformation of Juvenile Delinquents, containing an account of the laying the cornerstone of the new House of Refuge on Randall's Island, 24th November, 1852, with an address by Robert Kelly, president of the Society, together with the front elevation and ground plans of the buildings now erecting.
34. Second report of the New York Prison Association, for the year 1845.
35. First annual report of the New York Juvenile Asylum, for 1852.
36. Forty-seventh annual report of the Public School Society, June 25th, 1853.
38. Report of a committee on the dissolution of the Public School Society, July 29th, 1853, and its union with the ward school under charge of the Board of Education.
39. Manual of the Board of Education, for 1853.
40. Map of the property on Fiftieth Street, belonging to the institution, advertised to be sold at auction, June 6th, 1853.
41. Invitation and excursion tickets on the Hudson River R.R., for laying the cornerstone, November 22, 1853.
- The foregoing articles were presented by Israel Russell.
42. Two Chinese coins, presented by James D. Russell.
43. One dollar mechanics' bank bill of 1853, presented by Shepherd Knapp, president of the bank.
44. Dewitt Clinton, first President of the Institution, 1817, 1818.



Mansion of Col. James Monroe—Used many years as Boy's Primary Department



## DEAF-MUTES' JOURNAL

NEW YORK, JUNE 30, 1938

THOMAS FRANCIS FOX, *Editor*WILLIAM A. RENNER, *Business Manager*

THE DEAF-MUTES' JOURNAL (published by the New York School for the Deaf, at 163d Street and Riverside Drive) is issued every Thursday; it is the best paper for the deaf published, containing the latest news and correspondence; the best writers contribute to it.

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*Superintendent*

"He's true to God who's true to man;  
Whenever wrong is done  
To the humblest and the weakest  
Neath the all-beholding sun,  
That wrong is also done to us,  
And they are slaves most base,  
Whose love of right is for themselves  
And not for all the race."

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WE ARE assured by what seems to be expert authority that war is linked with unrest caused by rise in the costs in living standards. The unrest is the result of the social ability to remain within fixed boundary lines under population pressure. In the process of constant population changes foreign relations and the channels of international good-will cannot be continued indefinitely. The attempt to do so is sure to induce an equally determined attempt to overcome them.

China is presented to us as an example where a huge volume of people live at virtually the lowest level, but they are scarcely ruled by a desire to overrun their borders for the reason that the masses of Chinese are unaware that there are people elsewhere who live more comfortably than do the majority in China. As the standard of living rises a people become aware that still higher standards can be maintained, and if they lack material, or whatever else it may be that renders it impossible to improve the standard of living, restlessness follows, and with this comes war.

So much for the dictum of authority experts. To the ordinary man in the street at the present time, the stupid personal ambitions of leaders to have their own way at any cost, as seen in the arrogant boastings of present-day dictators, is more responsible for restlessness and war than anything else.

IN education discipline of the type which will instruct but not destroy, is much needed in the school system. The mere giving of information does not complete the function of educational training. Of course a definite curriculum is necessary, and it should include all the forces of society included in the environment of a child. Discipline is one of the major features of advanced education and should not be neglected in a well-managed school.

Our country requires the rule of a disciplined people. It is all very well to say that we should train children to grow up by expressing themselves, but we do not desire self-contained citizens. The claim that children should have self-expression and be permitted to do as they please, which in too many cases simply means ruthless selfishness, inordinate vanity and disregard of the feelings of others, follows from the lack of intelligent parental guidance.

Education that is sincerely progressive wants the disciplined individual who has mastered the important element of self-control. That which was proper for our parents in other days may not be sufficient for our children of today. The conditions of life and society have changed and children must be prepared to live under these changed conditions. The form of training which educates and does not destroy is that which discourages the self-expression which is destructive; it should have no place in real education.

MANY references in the past have urged the importance of introducing the all-year school. The day school, six-day week and all-year school are said to be inevitable. School time will be gradually lengthened until this new school system has finally been attained, and it will be accompanied by changes in the purpose and character of the school. There will be periods for play, rest and nutrition—phases of life to which the school must give more recognition.

It has been noted by educators that crime prevention work is urgently needed to meet the increase of crime among juveniles. This challenge must be met somehow through the in-between hours of the child's day. It is felt that crime and delinquency can only be prevented when life is made interesting for the young. It has been urged that the bringing of the parent into the school health field is an important need. There has been criticism of the lack of coordination between the health examination given children and the actual instructional program in the classroom. These and other details of instruction, which are receiving closer attention than heretofore, indicates the desire to find out faults and improve the school work in every way possible.

IN THE original historical record of the laying of the cornerstone of the main building at Fanwood, which appears in this issue, there is much that carries the mind of friends of the School backward almost a century.

In the maze of packing up material, rushing arrangements and hurrying forward the work of removal to its new site, the memories of old are maintained and honored. The former cornerstone, too late to be built into the new main hall, will occupy a conspicuous location upon the new site. The contents of the box within the stone will be removed to a place in the School's museum. The stone itself will form a part of the pedestal of a sun dial, to be presented by the Alumni Association, a suitable memento relating to the past and present. It becomes a silent yet effectual bond of union between the old Fanwood and the suggested new Mount Fanwood.

## What of the Sign Language?

By Tom L. Anderson, M.A.

*Reprinted from the American Annals of the Deaf*

During the past decade, my attention repeatedly has been drawn to evidence that something is happening to the sign language as it was handed down to my generation. It is apparent to me that we have lost many of the influences which formerly tended to standardize the manual language. I am led to the conclusion that the loss of these influences, and the substitution of several more or less unwholesome influences, is tending to bring forward an inferior sign language which we refer to as "a sign language" more correctly than as "the sign language." Nor is this new language uniform, except possibly in its origins, as will be shown.

In our schools today it seems to be the popular notion that anyone whose duty calls him to the platform to address deaf pupils may work out his own system of a manual language. We may except certain schools where veteran sign stylists remain in positions of some authority. Some of these persons may have had the advantage of a brief course of training. Some may have "just picked up" signs. Each speaker assumes an air of authority, and apparently aspires to perfection only in his own model. The attitude seems to be, "This is my sign language."

Perhaps I am guilty of painting with a large brush. As I said above, it is at least ten years since I began to notice that something was happening to the sign language which I have diligently sought to master over a period of thirty years. The observations made and the conclusions formed are herein frankly set forth.

First, I believe that the sign language as it came to me through the acknowledged masters has suffered in the hands of young hearing people who have taken it up without proper grounding in theory and practice. These young people whom I have observed seem to have little respect for the language as a noble means of communicating noble thoughts. Many of them use it in the spirit of the young man of my acquaintance who asks for the tomato catsup by making the sign for "cat" and the sign for "up" and expecting a laugh.

I have found many of these young people sincere enough, in a way, but just not knowing any better. Somewhere, somehow, they have picked up a smattering of the manual language. They seem to have rounded out their command of this language under the coaching of the children in their classes. They remain aloof from the adult deaf, and avoid exposure to the fluent and correct idiom under circumstances which would be embraced avidly by the sincere student of language. Never having studied the masters, if indeed these young people realized that such a personage exists as a master artist in the sign language, they seem content to get by in a slovenly manner, on a smattering.

There is no other word except slovenly which may be applied to the manual delivery of many young hearing teachers today. In their use of the manual alphabet, for example, they aim at speed rather than clarity, jerk the hand about in the air, slur the letters together. In general their delivery is such that college-trained deaf people, with years of practice in the manual language, find it difficult to understand them. This being true, how can the children be expected to understand them?

Second, the sign language as my generation inherited it has suffered the loss of its idiomatic grace and rhythm by being forced to trail along behind the spoken word. In our schools, the fashion now is to address assemblies bilingually, for the benefit of the hard-of-hearing pupils. Undoubtedly, in this circumstance, the hands are used grudgingly. If any slicking over

of thought is done, the speaker does it on his hands.

"Bilingual addresses are an abomination," said a veteran deaf educator to me recently. "Betwixt the temptation to watch the lips of the speaker and his hands, I sort of fall between two stools, and fail to get a clear idea of what is going on."

Thirty years ago, Dr. E. M. Gallaudet was the only person I knew reputedly competent to address an assemblage bilingually. Today, the feat is commonly attempted. But if the speaker's hands fall behind in the unequal race, the tongue wins. In occasional assemblies, where hearing visitors must be considered when introductory remarks are made, the bilingual delivery may be employed gracefully, by making brief statements first in one language, then in the other. But the deliberate use of the simultaneous delivery by persons not sufficiently competent to do so leaves intelligent deaf persons in the assemblage conscious of being cheated.

Third, the stress upon English thought, and "the English order," has altered the basic structure of the sign language. I do not hold with the "old timers" who would stress the many unnecessary inversions possible, and still practised by some. The English order has its merit, if it were not for the conscious effort made by many speakers to fit a sign to each word in the English sentence structure. To those familiar with the ideography of the pure sign language, some of the jams speakers get into when they try to sign every word would be ridiculous if they were not so significant of the harm being done.

It has been the fashion to refer to the manual language as "murdering English." Rapidly the situation is being reversed. Yet no one seems to be concerned, if indeed anyone clearly realizes that English is being encouraged to murder the language of signs. Since two wrongs never yet made one right, we may assume that the problem of precedence has not been solved.

For example, we see such practices as joining the conventional sign for "hard" to the conventional sign for "ship" to make "hardship," an idea well drawn by a proper conventional sign. We observe the sign for "under" joined to the sign for "stand" to make "understand." We see the directional sign "to" meaning "toward" now being used widely to complete the infinitive verbs. The sign for "that" is being pressed into wide use regardless of what part of speech the word "that" represents in a sentence. It is also being substituted for the article "the."

We see separate signs for "stand" and "up," likewise for "get" and "up," displacing expressive single signs. To those who are engaged in rebuilding the sign language on the new plan, the sign for "get" is a great boon. By its wide application, we "get married," "get hurt," "get praised," "get a letter," and so on, invariably in the combination of gestures introduced by catching an imaginary fly at rest on one of our fists.

According to the modern technique, if we cannot think of a sign for a word, or pervert one to use, we can spell out the word to preserve the purity of the English sentence. Large words tend to slow down the oral delivery to such an extent that they are slurred over in spelling. This destroys the clean-cut beauty of snappy, graceful spelling, such as we have enjoyed at the hands of the late Drs. Gallaudet, Long, William Jones and the living Drs. Hall, Ely, Peet, and Mr. Stevenson, to name a few.

It is when young people get up to sign poetry word-for-word that the iron enters the soul. I thought the uttermost limit was reached when a young woman attempted "O Little Town of Bethlehem," and proceeded to tell "How still we see thee lie!"—"lie" translated by drawing the backs of two fingers of the right hand across

(Continued on page 5)



## WHAT OF THE SIGN LANGUAGE?

(Continued from page 4)

the up-turned palm of the left. She might just as well have poked the index finger of the right hand across her chin.

Digressing somewhat, I'd like to point to this particular passage, "How still we see thee lie," as an illustration of the peculiar futility of mere words as compared with the adaptability of the pure sign language in communicating poetic thought. Translated into "word-signs," the word "how" is completely lost, considered in its poetic meaning. The sign for "how" follows the idea of "unfolding" or "producing," whereas the poet's "how" implies the superlative of "still." The skilled sign maker, therefore, is the master of English who can get beneath the poet's words to the poet's idea, which he then depicts. He would translate the above passage into an ideograph of a little town nestling very, very still, with the "how" left entirely out.

Fourth, the greatest crime the English substitution has done to the sign language has been the destruction of pantomime. Just as platform artists are becoming rarer and rarer, pantomime is becoming a lost art. Now it is the fashion for speakers to stand flat-footed, in one spot, using only the hands in producing word-signs. After fifteen or twenty minutes of this, we are quite ready to invite the speaker to sit down and rest his face and hands.

Artists of yesteryear varied their sign delivery by the skillful use of pantomime, effectively lightening their delivery so that we could sit for two hours and more in steady concentration without appreciable fatigue. For example, take the masterly rendition of "The Bells" by the late Dr. William Jones of Fanwood. His use of pantomime was outstanding above his wonderful command of signs and his remarkably clear, deliberate spelling. Just now his trick of bringing in jingling sleigh-bells comes to mind as an expressive illustration. Try it yourself. Place the front of your wrists against your sides, fingers extended forward. Gently sway the body from side to side, and as you incline to the side shake your hands loosely up and down, twice. Get rhythm. Jing-jing, jing-jing, jing-jing, jing-jing. Hear those bells?

Now, as far as English goes, or word-signs, just try to spell out a sentence, or make a combination of word-signs equally as effective in creating the imagery of bells jingling on horses. Remember, it is the eye which must hear those bells, not the ear.

I recall the manner in which the late Dr. Long told animal stories to children, particularly the story of the lion on the bank of a stream who saw his image reflected in the water and mistook it for a rival. Dr. Long would become a raging lion, glare furiously, shake his mane, roar, lash a powerful tail, tear up and down the bank, until finally he would plunge into the stream, to be disillusioned. No English, no word-signs, yet the story was revitalized vividly. The children would squeal delightedly, jump up and down, clap their hands, and fairly live the story with him. We no longer see such revitalization of stories for the benefit of young children who cannot share the pleasure of reading.

Fifth, enter the "hard of hearing" in greater and greater numbers, many of them well able to hear the teacher's speaking voice in the ordinary room. It cannot be denied that mixed-class teaching technique has been modified for the benefit of these young people who retain usable hearing. The natural effect is to place the non-oral, non-aural pupils at a grave disadvantage, not only in the classrooms but in group activities. Our schools for the deaf have acquired "Glee clubs," "Yell clubs," and other group organizations of the schools for the hearing

into which the non-aural pupils do not fit. Their inferiority complexes are not relieved when public assemblies are aimed, apparently, at their more fortunate brethren, with someone on the sideline making hurried gestures for their benefit.

For thirty years the National Association of the Deaf, in wisdom and foresight, has maintained a hard-working committee charged with the duty of obtaining and preserving motion-picture films showing outstanding sign language orators in action. These films are dedicated to posterity. This organization has expended upward of four thousand dollars on these films, and they are now priceless. This is a most laudable undertaking. However, at the rate the sign language is deteriorating among the deaf, what assurance have we that posterity will understand, or even appreciate, these films?

Taking the deaf population by and large, admittedly there are many who can and do get along well with hearing people without considering the sign language as essential to this relationship—the ideal of educators. These are reasonably contented in this association. Yet these same people find it to their great benefit occasionally to be together under circumstances that makes an understanding and an appreciation of the sign language profitable to themselves. Their usefulness to society is increased by their ability to take to the platform as leaders in thought and inspirers of action, and to make a clear, forceful argument that crystallizes public opinion.

On the other hand, there are many of the less fortunate who do not find happiness through exclusive association with the hearing. They are found in our social and welfare organizations, usually bearing with credit a heavy share of the work. They are in our churches, dependent upon the sign language for a broad appreciation of religious thought and a proper knowledge of God's will as interpreted by the missionaries. They all come up through our schools. Their welfare and happiness depend to a well recognized extent upon the use of a system of communication satisfying to them. The free choice of this definite group is the manual language.

The schools are finding it impossible to provide a substitute system of communication which this group can use to suit their need. I raise the point here: Since we are to have a sign language, why not the best? Why cannot we have one which is as graceful, beautiful, clear and expressive as we older deaf people know the sign language to be in the hands of those who regard its mastery as a laudable achievement and its practice as a high art? Why, in its place, must we be offered a mongrel gibberish—actually the "weed language" which an oral enthusiast once unjustly called the sign language of the past generation?

To clear the air, and in the hope of promoting a saner attitude toward the sign language of the deaf, I respectfully advance the following suggestions.

First, to the extent that the sign language must be used and is being used for lack of an acceptable substitute, let us have the very best. Let us reform the attitude current among educators, that we can sneak by with a modified gesture language backstage, allaying our fears with the palliative that this is not "the sign language" against which educators have been warring.

Educators of the deaf have never been able to unite, nor have the intelligent product of their schoolrooms been able to hold with them, in the opinion that the use of a manual language in its proper place is harmful in the broad education of the deaf. Psychologists have long viewed with alarm, but they have never been able to devise a successful substitute for, the gesture language. What is it that

now restrains us in the suitable use of signs? To whom must we apologize if we use the sign language effectively, where its use is found necessary and desirable? We know that we cannot transform deaf children into hearing adults this side of the Styx.

"The sign language is deteriorating," is one veteran educator's opinion we can freely share. "One reason is that the number of deaf teachers is decreasing. Another is that the oral schools will have none of it. A third is that the combined schools are featuring the oral side and the manual side is belittled and kept in the background. The young pupils pick it up from the older ones. There is no one to correct them and bring out the grace and beauty of the language. Consequently, the signs become jerky, crude, too fast, and accompanied by unnecessary facial grimaces. It seems to me that if signs are to be used at all, they should be taught in the right way."

Second, let only persons properly qualified to use the sign language be permitted to employ it in addressing deaf children in our schools. Let there be intelligent supervision and control, rather than an atmosphere of unenforced prohibition. To those who can qualify, and who render valuable service on the platform as well as in coaching young people for platform appearances, let there be adequate recognition rather than mere suffering. Let them have reason to take just pride in the attainment, that they may pass this feeling of pride on to the young people.

In this connection I would emphasize the fact that more than a few months' practice in a normal training class is necessary to qualify a young hearing person as an authority on the use of the sign language. These young students should not be turned over to our schools as qualified until they are able to earn the approbation of intelligent deaf critics. They should at least qualify up to a rigid standard of excellence in the use of the manual alphabet.

Perhaps I am too severe with our hearing friends. They are placed in the embarrassing position of having to master a difficult art while conscious that its practice is officially frowned upon, if not actually forbidden by their employers. They may be excused for reasoning that effort expended to master a forbidden accomplishment is wasted effort. They certainly have little reason to conclude that their enthusiastic study of the manual language will lead to professional advancement. Nevertheless, they find that they cannot entirely avoid using the sign language, if they associate with the deaf to any extent outside of the schoolrooms. They are indeed placed between two fires. They need proper encouragement, and the opportunity to study the manual language under dignified instruction. It must be admitted that the hearing teacher proficient in the use of the manual language can serve more broadly among the deaf, and thus exert a wider influence upon their lives, both in school and out. His service as an interpreter is not the least valuable he can render, yet his ability as an interpreter frequently places him in a most difficult position. Voluntary service at a teachers' convention is an example.

Interpreting is a task for an expert. The lack of really capable sign makers among the hearing teachers these days is glaringly shown at our conventions, where our young hearing friends are "put on the spot" literally, with no other reward than casual thanks. Convention officials recognize the need of this service, if they are to hold the deaf teachers as members, yet they expect to find ability among a group of young people who know they should not admit this ability, and who actually are penalized at conventions for the admission. I have seen interpreters, soaked in perspiration after rendering an address, forced to return

to their hotel for a bath and a change of clothing.

Since this service is voluntary, we can scarcely be frank about the quality without seeming to be discourteous. So everyone concerned seems to be nicely settled in an attitude of "suffering in silence." There is no sense in this. The sensible course would be to provide a team of expert interpreters, and pay them well for a service which is difficult to render.

Third, let us disassociate the hand from the tongue. The human brain can be forced to govern the movements of both simultaneously, but proper synchronization is not attainable with full justice to both modes of expression. If we must have extended bilingual remarks, let there be an interpreter in order that both languages may with proper dignity be emphasized.

Since the entrance of the hard of hearing in greater and greater numbers has brought about the need for this dual delivery, the logical remedy is to segregate the groups in both schoolrooms and assemblies. Injustice in some degree is both possible and probable to both groups, and especially to the group of genuinely deaf children for whom these schools were created, where the school activities are complicated by the intermixture of these hard-of-hearing public-school children. Nor do we gain anything by combining these groups. It is noticeable that these hard-of-hearing pupils seldom are disposed to exert themselves in school activities up to standards set by leading deaf pupils in the past, except possibly in athletics.

Fourth, let us drop the notion that we must have a sign for every word in every sentence. Especially in public addresses, let us give the quick minds of the deaf a chance to leap ahead joyously, to cover the thought. Why fetter them to mere words which, after all, may be of no great importance to the thought pattern?

Fifth, let us promote, encourage and reward the platform appearances of the few remaining exponents of the proper sign language, that they may pass to this generation something of their art, their fire. Are we not too prone to feature addresses by hearing speakers through interpreters, while we ignore the inspirational value of addresses by prominent deaf men and women who have attained success in life against the same grievous handicap these young people face? These deaf speakers can talk with authority such as few hearing men can command. They should be honored and encouraged.

Sixth, let us take from their storage vaults the films intended for posterity and make use of them now. Especially let us see the gatherings of our great national organizations of the deaf enriched by exhibitions of these films, treated in a spirit of reverence. Let the young people and the teachers in our schools see these films, that they may have a proper concept for a model. There is little virtue in entertainment stunts, self-devised, where both pupils and teachers lack proper models in the art of presentation.

These suggestions may not point to the millennium, and they are not intended to. However, I believe that they point to a sane approach to the solution of an embarrassing problem. They may also point to a method of ending the present confusion before it becomes worse confounded throughout the land.

**St. Ann's Church for the Deaf**

511 West 148th Street, New York City

REV. GUILBERT C. BRADDOCK, Vicar

Church services every Sunday at 3 P.M.

Holy Communion, first Sunday of each month, 11 A.M. and 3 P.M., from November to June.

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### The Search for the Lost Cornerstone

With the construction of the new school at White Plains approaching the completion of a long-dreamed reality, thoughts naturally turned to the ceremonies in connection with the new buildings. The first ceremony to be planned was the laying of the cornerstone, which took place on January 12, 1938. This brought to mind the cornerstone laying ceremonies of our present structure, built in 1853.

A visit to the School archives unearthed a booklet in which was listed the contents of the cornerstone, the program of the ceremony, the speeches that were made, names of the distinguished guests and speakers, comments of the guests as well as a description of the grounds, but a diligent search in this booklet failed to find any mention of the location of the cornerstone.

The Annals of the Deaf of that period revealed the same information. A call to the 42nd Street Library for newspaper clippings of that day brought forth the information already possessed. The Historical Society of New York confessed they had passed through a similar experience when they moved from their Second Avenue building to their present site. The Society did not learn the

location of the cornerstone until the old building had been torn down. This fact strengthened the belief that cornerstones of that age were not marked for posterity. Letters to former graduates brought forth very interesting replies. One Fanwood graduate, David R. Tillinghast, now 97 years old, remembered the ceremonies as well as some of the outstanding characteristics of several of the speakers on that occasion, which we thought quite remarkable, but he could not remember the location of the cornerstone.

The "missing" cornerstone then became the subject of conversation of the School family, with arguments pro and con as to where the cornerstone should be and why. Stones of odd dimensions in various parts of the buildings soon found faithful adherents in arguments as to why the cornerstone should be in that particular spot—bringing to bear the geographical location, transportation facilities of that time, sociological and philosophical quirks of that age and the general habit of builders to put cornerstones in that part of the building. A quotation from a booklet describing the ceremonies made many people think the stone should be in the South wing.

A few stones different from others promptly became the center of thorough study and philosophical debate. Old building plans were consulted but, gradually, the consensus of opinion was that the cornerstone should be in the front of the main building, somewhere. Mr. Tyrrell then began to make an electrical machine, which he describes in his report, and interest ran high until one day success was achieved to the intense satisfaction of those who had selected that particular spot.

Preparations were made to remove the stone from the foundation of the building and the curiosity of all interested parties will culminate in the final opening of the cornerstone box after a period of 85 years' rest.

D.

### Locating the Cornerstone

By Wilbur L. Tyrrell, Principal Vocational Department

The following is a brief description of the electrical apparatus which I devised and used in searching for the cornerstone of the New York School for the Deaf.

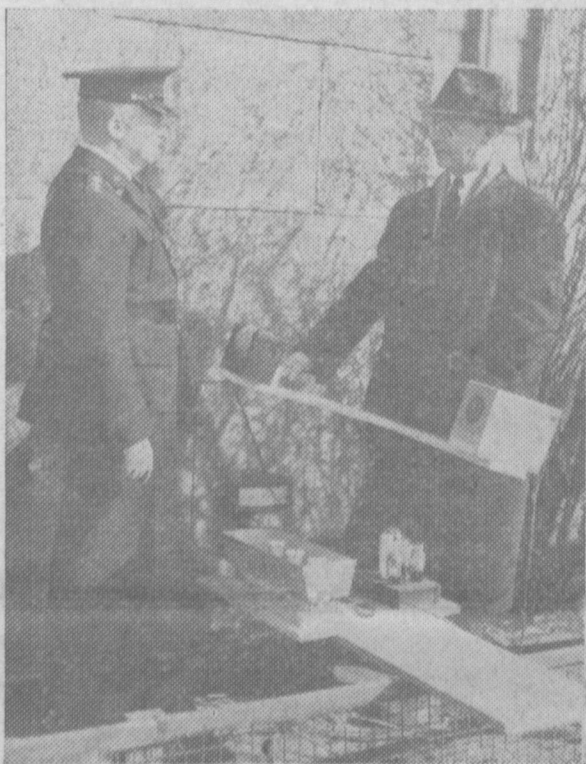
This apparatus consists of means for generating waves of magnetism and means for detecting their presence at some distance, a rectifying or changing device for changing alternating current to direct current and an indicating meter of great sensitivity.

The generating device consists of a coil of heavy wire around a

laminated iron core connected through resistors to a supply of current at 60 cycles and 110 volts. The current flowing through the coil when in operation is approximately 15 amperes. At a right angle to the generating coil and approximately 20 degrees from it a detecting coil is mounted. Both coils are mounted rigidly to the same frame. The detecting coil consists of a coil of heavy wire with a large iron wire core. When there is no metal between the two coils of the apparatus, a certain definite amount of magnetic flux flows from the generator to the receiver. Since this is an alternating or back and forth movement of flux, a slight voltage is set up in the receiving coil by the process of mutual induction. This is also called transformer action. It is through this characteristic of magnetism that it is possible to transform electrical energy from one voltage to another. The operation of an induction motor, the most common type used today, is also dependent upon this action.

The slight voltage which is set up in the second coil is greatly amplified (several thousand times), by the amplifying circuit which consists of one rectifier tube, one high gain screen grid tube and two power amplifying tubes. These are connected in a circuit designed to efficiently amplify low frequency voltages. The output of this amplifier is between eight and ten watts at seventy volts, but this is reduced to approximately five volts by a step-down transformer. A small electric light bulb is connected to the secondary of the output transformer and when the apparatus is functioning, this lamp is lighted to approximately normal candle-power. The lamp is enclosed in a light-tight box and is allowed to shine on a light sensitive cell which produces a minute direct current. This minute current is conducted to a very sensitive electric measuring instrument called a microammeter.

When a piece of metal (non-ferrous or non-magnetic) is inserted into the magnetic field of the first coil, it absorbs a small amount of energy by generating what is known as eddy-currents. It acts as a shield for the second coil and thereby reduces the amount of electro-magnetic flux which may reach the second coil. When this occurs, the voltage to the little lamp in the light-tight box is slightly lowered and its brightness is thereby reduced by a very small amount. Unless there is a pronounced change in the magnetic field, the



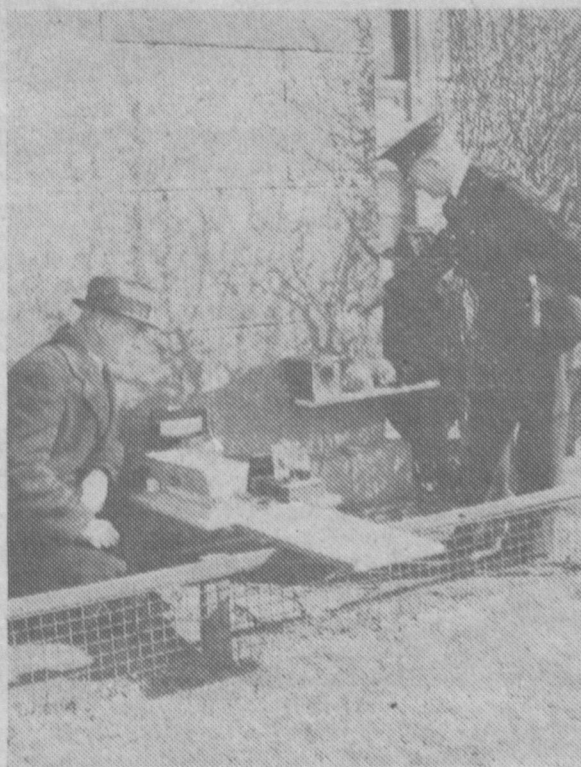
1—Preparing for Test



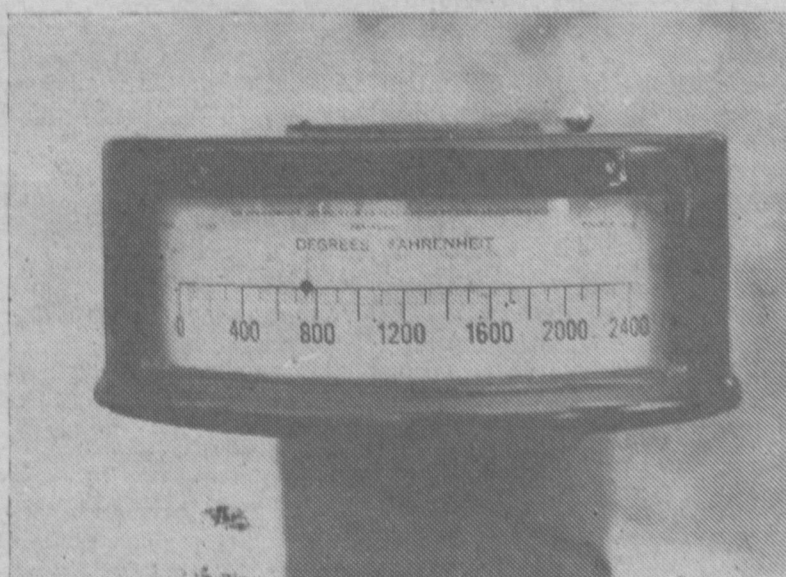
2—Test of corner shows no lead box present



3—as proved by high meter reading, 1150



4—The stone which changed meter reading



5—to 750 showing presence of box



eye will be unable to discern the reduction of light in the tiny bulb. However, the light-sensitive cell picks up the difference and carries it to the meter which is so sensitive that it plainly shows the effects of the metal being inserted into the field.

All metals have different electrical characteristics. Some metals are better conductors of electricity than others. Copper is a better conductor than lead, silver is better than copper. The amount of energy absorbed by the piece of metal in the magnetic field of the first coil depends to a great extent upon its so-called "specific resistance." If this resistance is high a small amount of current can flow and therefore a small amount of energy is absorbed. However, if the specific resistance is low, a large amount of current can flow and therefore a large amount of energy can be absorbed. The indicating instrument shows this difference very positively by large changes in deflection of the pointer.

The fact that the box within the cornerstone was made of lead made it particularly difficult to detect even with a super-sensitive device such as we have because of the effects just stated regarding resistance. Lead resists the flow of electricity about twelve times as much as copper does.

When the tests were made to determine the presence of the metal box in the cornerstone, the indicating meter showed a change of seven-millionths of an ampere of current when we approached the cornerstone. This deflected the pointer of the meter more than an inch and gave us positive evidence that we had located the lead box.

The presence of non-ferrous metals within the magnetic field of the coil causes the meter to indicate a smaller amount of current. The presence of iron, steel or any metal with magnetic properties causes the pointer to indicate an increase in current. This latter causes an effect which is the same as shortening the magnetic field, resulting in a large flow of magnetism. Because of these two opposite effects, water and steam pipes did not cause any confusion in searching for the cornerstone.

This explanation may seem rather technical, but I believe that most people will understand it sufficiently to realize what was being attempted and the manner in which it was accomplished. I need not state that many devices and combinations of devices were tried and much experimenting was done before the final apparatus was developed.

#### Attended Cornerstone Ceremonies

Mr. David R. Tillinghast, perhaps the oldest Fanwood graduate still living, was present at the cornerstone laying in 1853. He was then 12 years old, and is now in his 97th year. A letter to him asking if he knew where the cornerstone was brought the following reply:

Dear Mr. Skyberg:

I am sorry I am unable to recollect what I saw at the laying of the cornerstone. I remember that the whole School, and the Board of Directors gathered at the bottom of the hill, on which the mansion is located, to do what I was too young to understand. I was then a few months more than twelve years old.

One impression I got was that of Laurent Clerc making an address. One remark I vaguely remember was that he saw Napoleon Bonaparte riding horseback before he left France. If a teacher had made me notice the cornerstone and explained its meaning, I might be able to tell you more than I can now. I am inclined to believe that the stone was laid in the southwestern corner of the girls' wing. I am ninety-six years old, consequently my memory is not very reliable.

Yours sincerely,

DAVID R. TILLINGHAST.

1619 1st Avenue, South  
St. Petersburg, Florida

#### Harvey Prindle Peet

Excerpts from a biographical sketch of the President of the School at time of Cornerstone Laying

Harvey Prindle Peet was born in the little town of Bethlem, Litchfield Co., Conn., November 19, 1794. Bethlem is one of the smallest and roughest towns in the state, but has been remarkably favored in the successive ministrations of two great lights of the church, the Rev. Joseph Bellamy, D.D., and Rev. Azel Backus, D.D., both eminent as theologians, as preachers, and as teachers of youth. Dr. Backus, afterward the first president of Hamilton College, conducted in this town a family school of high character, which attracted to Bethlem several families of rare intelligence and refinement. Under such influences, the intellectual and religious tone of the society in which the earliest years of the subject of this sketch were passed, was eminently such as to favor the acquisition of that force of character, amenity of manners, and strength of religious feeling for which Dr. Peet has ever been distinguished; while at the same time, born a farmer's son, and growing up with healthful alternations of study, labor and free recreation on the rugged and picturesque hills of Litchfield County, he acquired that well developed frame, freedom of movement, physical hardihood, and practical tact that have eminently fitted him for the exhausting work of a teacher of the deaf and dumb.

His early advantages of education were few. Working on a farm in the summer, and attending a district school in the winter, and fond of reading at all seasons, like many other New England boys who have worked their own way to education, and in the rough process acquired the power of working their way to subsequent distinction, he began at the early age of sixteen to teach a district school. This employment he continued during five winters, till at the age of twenty-one, he had established a character for ability in his profession, which procured him the situation of teacher of English studies in schools of a higher class—at first, in that of Dr. Backus already mentioned, in his native town, and afterward in that of Rev. Daniel Parker, in Sharon, Conn. He now saw prospects of higher usefulness opening before him, to the realization of which the advantages of a college education would be important. In the school of Dr. Backus he began his Latin grammar at the same time that he taught a class in English studies. After a delay, chiefly occasioned by want of means, he went, in the fall of 1816, to Andover, and fitted for college in Phillip's Academy, under the care of John Adams, LL.D., father of Rev. William Adams, D.D., of New York.

Mr. Peet entered the time honored walls of Yale in 1818, and graduated in 1822, taking rank with the first ten in his class. He had made a public profession of faith in Christ some years before, and his original purpose was to devote himself to the work of the christian ministry, but an invitation to engage as an instructor of the deaf and dumb in the American Asylum at Hartford, gave him an opportunity of discovering his special fitness for this then new profession. Thus began that career which has proved so honorable to himself, and so beneficial to that afflicted portion of the human family in whose service his life has been spent.

The early success and reputation of the American Asylum, which made it, thirty years ago, in popular estimation, the model institution of its kind, was mainly due to the careful and felicitous choice of its early teachers. Mr. Peet's associates at Hartford were all able and most of them distinguished men. When we find that, among such teachers as his seniors in the profession, Thomas H. Gallaudet, Laurent Clerc, W. C. Woodbridge, and W. W. Turner, Mr. Peet was early distinguished in all the qualifications of an efficient teacher of the deaf, we are prepared for the

eminence he attained. Within two years after he joined the Asylum, he was selected as its steward, an office giving him the sole control of the household department, and of the pupils out of school hours. The duties of this post were superadded to those of the daily instruction of a class, either alone sufficient to occupy the energies of an ordinary man.

In the year 1830, the Directors of the New York Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, the second American school of its kind in priority of date—were awakened to the importance of placing their school on higher ground. Seeking for a man whose weight of character, acquaintance with the most successful methods of instruction and tried efficiency as a teacher and as an executive officer, selected Dr. Peet, who entered on his new duties in New York on the first of February, 1831. He continued in that office until 1867, retiring to become Principal-Emeritus until his death in 1873.



9—Cornerstone of Old Fanwood—Laid November 22, 1853  
Removed April 25, 1938, for transfer to new Fanwood



8—The lead box comes to light



6—Exploratory drilling



7—The lead box is there!



**Anent Deafness**

By Thomas Francis Fox

## XIX

As has been previously commented, very few people with normal hearing fully realize what deafness exactly entails upon the life of the victim; they have a vague idea, sometimes sympathy, occasionally impatience when loud bawling has no effect when addressing one deficient of hearing. People fail to imagine anything they have not themselves personally experienced, and their judgment are all in those terms. As to the set judgments of those who have known each other long and even intimately, often this is due to a feeling, totally unconscious, of an inferiority and they try to ease the displeasure of this feeling by reverting to, or holding the picture in mind of the day when that inferiority did not exist. The rub is that the educated deaf do not consider themselves as inferior to others simply by reason of deficiency in an important sense. It is an inconvenience at times, but they have become used to it in most instances, and do not regard it as a personal disgrace or a cause of inferiority.

It is an interesting study to scan incidents in the experience of the adult deaf as a consequence of their handicap. To repeat, no one who is not actually deaf can properly envisage adequately the entanglements and embarrassments often met, nor can they realize what a deaf person actually feels under the infirmity in reaction to a situation where the sound of the human voice is unheard. To the congenitally deaf this lack is felt only on rare occasions, if at all; one whose life has been passed in a realm of silence has no full conception of spoken language in its relation to sound. He does not miss it, does not consider himself as calling for compassion, and is apt to resent any such attitude towards him on the part of friends and the public; of course, there may be exceptions to the rule. Having adjusted himself to a world where vocal sound is unknown, he finds sources of enjoyment in forms which the hearing might consider unpromising fields. The congenital deaf under their handicap endeavor to face

life and make good by fitting themselves to play their role as industrious and useful members of the community. That they succeed is apparent, for in the percentage of people who are self-supporting they maintain as high an average as people who have all their senses unimpaired.

In the matter of sensitiveness to their loss of the sense of hearing, the case is somewhat different with those who once heard and who became deaf after the age of adaptability had passed; these miss the compensations which are the privilege of the congenitally deaf. To those who once possessed hearing and lost it in youth, there is a keen feeling of the deprivation, at first. They miss the familiar sounds, the voices of loved ones, the songs that brought delight, the tones that minister to the spirit; they view deafness not merely as a handicap, but the passing away for all time of things which can never again be enjoyed. They gradually readjust themselves to an entirely new mode of life and the difficulties that accompany deafness, accepting with a cheerful philosophy that which the fates have ordained; taking up their burden as inevitable, they become resigned, if not reconciled to it.

With the impediment of deafness to contend against, the disadvantage would seem to be sufficiently heavy in itself to warrant them from the added unfairness and prejudice which they occasionally meet with at the hands of people. In their struggle with the heavy odds of their physical defect it would seem that their condition would merit the consideration and encouragement of all—a spirit of fair play. But there are times when the deaf are apparently shunned, shut off by their infirmity from the pleasure of social converse, as they are naturally from the pleasing tones of the human voice and the music of nature. The only substitute for a voice, and one they often notice, is a frown, harsh and peremptory—and yet, the deaf are expected to manifest all the sweetness of a genial nature. The hearing public needs to remember that the deaf are not different from other people, except that they cannot hear. They have all the hopes and desires that animate other people, and need friendly encouragement rather than unmerited rebuffs.

**Union League of the Deaf, Inc.**

Club Rooms open the year round. Regular meetings on Third Tuesday of each month, at 8:15 P.M. Visitors coming from a distance of over twenty-five miles welcome. Benjamin Mintz, President; Joseph F. Mortiller, Secretary, 711 Eighth Avenue, New York City.

## RESERVED

**BROOKLYN FRAT'S DAY****Luna Park, August 20th**

(If rain following Saturday, August 27th)

PAUL J. TARLEN, *Chairman* Lutheran Deaf-Mute Ladies' Aid Society.**SUBSCRIPTION BLANK**

19

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Church services, every Sunday at 11 A.M., Holy Communion, first and third Sundays of each month.

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Get-together socials at 8 P.M., all other Wednesdays. (Use Racine Ave. entrance) Minister's address, 6336 Kenwood Avenue.

**Silent Athletic Club, Inc., of Philadelphia, Pa.**

3529 Germantown Avenue

Club-rooms open to visitors during week-ends, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, and during holidays.

Business meeting every second Friday of the month.

Socials every Fourth Saturday.

John E. Dunner, President. For information write to Howard S. Ferguson, Secretary, 250 W. Sparks St., Olney, Philadelphia.

**Hebrew Association of the Deaf of Philadelphia**

Jefferson Manor at S. W., corner of Broad and Jefferson Streets.

Meets first Sunday evening of each month from 3 to 5:30 P.M.

Rooms open for Socials Saturdays and Sundays.

For information, write to Joseph Gelman, President, or Mrs. Sylvan G. Stern, Secretary, 5043 N. 16th St., Philadelphia, Pa.

**Ephpheta Society for the Catholic Deaf, Inc.**

St. Francis Xavier College, 30 West 16th Street, New York City

For any information regarding Ephpheta Society communicate direct to either:

Mrs. Catherine Gallagher, President, 129 West 98th Street, New York City  
Herbert Koritzer, Secretary, 21-50 Thirty-eighth Street, Astoria, L. I.**Brooklyn Hebrew Society of the Deaf, Inc.**

Meets second Sunday of each month except July and August, at the Hebrew Educational Society Building, Hopkinson and Sutter Avenues, Brooklyn.

Services and interesting speakers every Friday evening at 8:30 P.M., at the H. E. S.

English Class, every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 8 o'clock sharp, from September to May, at P. S. 150, Sackman and Sutter Avenues, Brooklyn.

Louis Baker, President; Louis Cohen, Secretary; 421 Logan Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.

**Hebrew Assn. of the Deaf, Inc.**

Temple Beth-El, 76th St., Cor. 5th Ave.

Meets Third Sunday at 8 P.M. of the month. Information can be had from Mrs. Tanya Nash, Executive Director, 4 East 76th Street, New York City; or Mrs. Joseph C. Sturtz, Secretary, 1974 Grand Ave., New York City.

Religious Services held every Friday evening at 8:30. Athletic and other activities every Wednesday evening. Socials First and Third Sunday evenings. Movies Third Wednesday of the month.

## THIRTY-NINTH

**BIENNIAL CONVENTION****NEW ENGLAND GALLAUDET ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF**

Headquarters—BILTMORE HOTEL, PROVIDENCE, R. I.

**July 2, 3, 4, 1938****PROGRAM**Saturday, July 2.—2 P.M. OPENING OF CONVENTION  
8:30 P.M. BALLSunday, July 3.—2 P.M. BUSINESS MEETING  
8:00 P.M. BOAT EXCURSIONMonday, July 4.—10:00 A.M. OUTING, Crescent Amusement Park  
1:00 P.M. RHODE ISLAND SHORE DINNER

The Biltmore Hotel has given us a limited number of rooms at reduced rates, so make your reservations early.

For information and reservations write to

Abram Cohen, Chairman, or to Frederick Ruckdeshel, Secretary  
Rhode Island School for Deaf, 520 Hope St., Providence, R. I.

1865 THIRTY - FOURTH 1938

**BIENNIAL CONVENTION****Empire State Association of the Deaf****Albany, N. Y., July 29 - 31, 1938****Headquarters -- HOTEL TEN EYCK**

Please check all items below if possible and mail this slip to Secretary Wm. M. Lange, Jr., 57 Dove St., Albany, N. Y., immediately.

☐ I will be present at Ten Eyck Hotel Thursday afternoon.☐ I will be present Friday morning. ☐ Afternoon.☐ I will be present Saturday morning. ☐ Afternoon.☐ I will be present at All-day Outing Sunday.☐ I will attend the Banquet on Saturday night (July 30th) and will send my remittance for my reservation before that date. Banquet—\$2.00 per plate. How many do you wish to reserve? .....

NOTICE:—All reservations for banquet must be accompanied by remittances on or before the 20th day of July, 1938. Tickets will be limited to 300.